



Let's Paint The Town Red

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Let's Paint The Town Red by kaspbrak

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Summary:

Derry after curfew's quiet. A little too quiet.

Richie Tozier and Beverly Marsh plan to fix that.

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Author's Note:

movie and book based, pre-confrontations with pennywise. just two rowdy kids having a good time

[prompt; 'Richie and Bev being left Very Unsupervised by people (including the other Losers) and getting into trouble, and narrowly getting out? Like egging cars or something like that.']

The eerily silent southern Derry neighborhood stood stock still, the tightly packed houses casting creeping shadows along the alley walls. The sky's blazing auburn glow stained the whole town a dim crimson hue, and Richie found himself grinning as he strolled along, smiling down at his scuffed trainers as he let his mind wander to the fact that he'd already been beaten in his promise to Bev that they'd 'paint the town red tonight'.

Sunset was always the best time of day, Richie knew, and that was the main reason the duo planned their outings accordingly. Walking leisurely to the end of the street, he reached the only house with open windows- a prior-planned unspoken sign that its inhabitant was ready to sneak out.

"Psst! Carrot top!"

Weakly aimed pebbles ricocheted off the apartment's rickety window, the crack resounding through the bare streets like the shot of a pistol.

"Carrot top! Hey! Bevs!"

Fiery copper locks that glowed like embers- *January embers*, Richie *thought with a grin*- poked over the edge of the sill after a hesitant moment, the dim off-white lighting of the room behind casting a silvery halo around the figure's visage. That mane of auburn hair was followed by the excited, almost gleaming green-grey eyes of Beverly Marsh, as she stared down at Richie with a blooming smile.

"Can you shout any louder, Trashmouth?" Beverly jeered softly as to not disturb others, swinging a leg down onto the metal steps beneath the window and casting another glance down at the boy below, who rubbed the raised gooseflesh peppering his arms and tapped his foot rapidly to escape the chill.

"Well, I would, but I'm sure Bill wouldn't be happy to hear I was sneakin' around with his girl!" Richie grinned boisterously and kept his voice to a hushed yell, stuffing his clenched fists into his pockets with a broad grin that was all boyish charm and pearly teeth.

A flattered rosy blush tinted freckled cheeks at the mention of the Denbrough boy.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever." Beverly's lips turned up into her sweet half-smile at the joke and she rolled her eyes, and hopped down the last few rickety steps to join Richie's side.

"So, did you get 'em?"

Richie's question hung in the air briefly until Beverly brandished the pack of Marlboros with a flourish, before they vanished back into the depths of the pockets of her well-loved overalls.

"Dad's last pack," she murmured, looking prideful. "Swiped 'em while he was asleep." Her words were met with an appreciative grin from the boy beside her.

They'd planned this outing down to a T, and walked silently side by side for a moment, passing the streets in a quick upbeat walk, eager to escape watchful eyes at the windows. Sunset was always the best time, as everyone who wasn't Richie or Bev usually stayed indoors after the 7pm curfew, thus the streets of Derry took on the unsettling likeness of a ghost town at this time.

It might as well have been one , Richie thought, averting his eyes from the clumps of rusted staples on posts that once held god knows how many missing persons posters.

An unwelcome shiver shot down his spine, the thought discarded at once.

It was only until they'd cleared the housing lots and turned down the battered path to the Barrens that they began to chat again, offering jovial comments here and there as they pushed their way through the musky undergrowth. It was an agreement that was never spoken of, as Beverly confided in Richie what she could not confide in the others, as much as she loved them dearly.

Bev had confided *everything* in Richie. Not a word was spoken

between them of her home life but he knew, he'd been there to comfort her countless times after she'd been run out of her own home, and now he did his best to make sure their escapades went unknown to her father. In return, she'd comforted him during hard times, poking fun to get the boy to crack a smile and forget.

For this, Beverly's appreciation of the scruffy boy was heartfelt.

Richie had always seemed to just understand, listening intently enough to her troubles to let his mouthy disposition slip, even if just for a moment. She'd never tell him she noticed this, of course, she enjoyed seeing this sweet side that was hidden beneath layers of sarcasm and dick jokes.

To her, it was comforting to know that even though he never usually shut up, the only time his mouth stopped running at a million miles per hour was when Bev was confiding in him. It was endearing, and she held this, too, close to her heart.

They were, as Stan would say, birds of a feather.

The silence between them was broken by the shuffling of clothing as they chose a spot to sit and practically collapsed into place, scuffed shoes drawn up to sit cross-legged facing each other. This spot in particular was their favourite, as the parted trees offered a perfect view of the gleaming sky, all its colours mixed and splattered across the horizon like paints meticulously smeared on a canvas.

The stolen pack of Marlboros was cracked open without hesitation, accompanied with shared grins, cigarettes in hand, looking every part

an early shadow of their adult selves.

“So,” Bev began, rosy cheeks briefly illuminated with a honey-coloured glow as her cigarette was lit by a match. “What’s the agenda, Rich?” The soft sigh that followed sent tendrils of smoke spiralling skyward, and Richie watched absentmindedly before leaning forward to light the tip of his smoke, too.

His chest puffed cockily. “Only the best of escapades for Bevvie dearest tonight,” Richie simpered, nose crinkling as he pulled a face to match the voice, perking up considerably at the prospect of chaos. He’d put on his proper Brit accent- the one he knew made Bev chuckle- and propped himself up on a dirty palm to plot.

“Ya see doll, I been thinkin’ maybe we give a coupla’ houses the breakfast special.” The accent switched flawlessly as he leaned in to conspire. His eyebrow quirked, seeking approval in a silent query.

After a moment’s thought, Bev’s lips turned up to a smirk at the sight of the boy’s goofy grin, and she let a puff of smoke blast from her nostrils in amusement. “I’m up for it,” she straightened her legs and kicked them over Richie’s lap. *“Cos I know our first target.”*

One hastily drawn plan later and they had meandered out of the Barrens like two cats on the prowl, smouldering cigarette butts stamped into the dirt by their scuffed boots.

“You gotta throw ‘em in an arc,” Richie instructed from their hiding

place across the street as he mimed an overarm throw, gently palming the smooth shell of the egg in his grip. The selected target was Mr Keene's car outside his pharmacy, chosen by Bev on account of said old man's wandering gaze and uncomfortable stares.

"As if you need to show *me* how to throw..." Beverly mused with a wicked grin and raised brow, reaching for ammo and unleashing a demonstration of a perfect throw in one swift movement, the egg splattering dead centre on the windscreen from a good 20 feet away.

Lips soft as a peach drew back into a proud grin, baring pearly teeth sweetly.

"Piece 'a cake."

This gleaming smile was met with rolled eyes and an irritated 'tch', as Richie tried, and failed, to imitate the perfect aim. The egg sailed through the air, and landed a foot shy of the side door.

"*Fuck!*" He grunted, booting a crumpled can in frustration. Bev sent three more flying, each pelting the windscreen once more, practically dancing circles around Richie's throwing skills.

"I thought you were the prank master!" Bev teased and shook her head fondly, ready to guide the boy's next feeble attempt at a throw when the street suddenly lit up like the fourth of July, accompanied by the crunch of wheels on loose tarmac. She squinted against the source of the blinding light and raised a hand to block it out, temporarily dazed as the world was cloaked briefly by swimming spots flashing before her eyes. The haze cleared like a thinning fog to reveal two bright beams, growing as the source drew closer.

In her peripheral vision, she just about caught the shape of Richie's tacky patterned shirt poised to throw. Panic seized her, vocal chords frozen in the vice-like grip of terror.

"Wait! Don't!" The frantic call fell on deaf ears as the ammo slipped freely from Richie's grip in one slick movement.

Time seemed to move in slow motion sending the events unravelling in a downwards spiral of perfect chaos like no other. By the time Bev had finally managed to blink away her daze, it was too late. The damage had already been done.

This time, the egg had sailed in a flawless arc through the chilled air like an arrow seeking a board and hit its mark, splattering in a gloriously gooey splat of orange in the centre of the side window of none other than *Belch Huggins'* battered blue Trans Am.

Richie's shit-eating grin was godly and unrivalled.

Beverly would have taken a double take, had she had the time, blinking in sheer disbelief.

"What the fuck, Richie?!"

The leftover ammo was swiftly abandoned. The carton Richie held clattered to the ground unceremoniously.

“ Bullseye! ”

He crowed proudly with a grin rivalling the Joker's, throwing both hands in the air as if praising the heavens for such a perfect shot.

“ Richie Tozier gets off the greatest one ever known to man! Yowza yowza y- ack-! ”

Bev's death grip on his collar almost span his head, forcing him to stumble after her as she sprinted as fast as spindly legs could carry her to the inviting shadows of the alley. No sooner had they reached the mouth of the passageway, the grimy brick walls had been bleached by the seeking beams of the Trans Am's headlights, casting their shadows out in front of them like huge pillars of shade.

“T-This is the best moment of my life!” This call was followed by a triumphant whoop from Richie, worsening the situation further, as usual.

The enlarged shapes strode like giants stretching before them as they bolted, indicating the car was gaining on them, mirroring their internal bubbling adrenaline and unbridled excitement at the thought of getting away with such a feat.

The alley's end was in sight. The promise of freedom loomed so close they could almost-

Clack!

Bev leapt at the jarring sound, catching a brief glimpse of the light that glinted off the beer can launched at them.

“Now you’ve really done it, you little fucks!” Came the infuriated shriek of Henry Bowers, hot on their tail.

The sole sounds echoing through the passage were impossibly fast thumps of trainers on concrete and the sounds of their heavy breathing as they hauled themselves at top speed to safety. Richie began to snort through his wheezes, a very feeble attempt at hiding his amusement.

They caught eye contact briefly, not slowing for even a fraction of second. Finally, the hilarity of the situation sunk in and delirious due to the adrenaline, they let loose the rabid howls of laughter they’d been holding back weakly, in a raucous, giddy chorus.

The cackles continued to echo around them as they turned another corner, the breakneck rhythm of their elevated heartbeats pounding in their ears loud enough to block out Henry Bowers’ furious hollers close on their tail. Bev could practically picture the spittle flying from his lips, face contorted in rage, the gruesome image only serving as more of an incentive to run for the hills. She fancied keeping her skin today, anyway.

Richie’s white-knuckled grip on her wrist shook Bev from her thoughts, yanking her off down a narrow side street. The unavoidable stench of old garbage hit her like a brick wall. She fended off the

urge to gag from revulsion with watery eyes, still wheezing.

“I’m gonna fucking scalp you, you little shits! You’re dead fucking meat!” Henry’s voice cracked with the ferocity of his holler, the now distant sound echoing through nearly half of Derry as the distance between them grew gradually. It was piercing enough to rouse families in nearby houses, the occupants peering out from drawn curtains in morbid fascination at the sight of two scruffy kids sprinting between alleys like the devil himself was on their heels. *Which, figuratively, he was* , Richie mused.

“If you can catch us, fucker!” ‘Trashmouth Tozier’ hollered back, proving once more his nickname was earned, whilst tossing up a lewd gesture over his shoulder. His riotous laughter dwindled to a shocked yelp as the car still hot on their tails revved and sped so close the bumper just barely skimmed his ankles.

“W-Where-” Bev heaved for breath mid-sentence, the only sound audible being the furious rushing of blood through her head.

Richie’s response was to gasp desperately, lacking the air to form a coherent response.

“...Freese’s!” He finally managed, the very last of his energy kicking in to get them through the final stretch to safety. The shop would be closed by now, with it being way past curfew, but the crates and dumpsters littering the street behind it would serve just fine to shelter them from certain death at the hands- *or rather, tires-* of the furious Bowers gang.

The sign of the shop loomed into view like a beacon of hope, and the now-dishevelled kids nearly wept at the sight of the alley mouth beside it, open and inviting to them in their exhausted state like a beckoning shroud of shadow. It grew closer and closer, and Bev's heart leapt at the thought of rest, until Richie's feet stumbled over each other in a clumsy display and he plummeted to the ground in a tangle of limbs, rolling and tumbling from the momentum of his breakneck sprint.

"Richie! C'mon!"

Beverly skidded to a halt, heart lodged in her throat as she moved to haul Richie to his feet. The crunch of gravel under tires alerted them to the approach of the Bowers gang once more, cruising slowly to corner them like wounded prey.

She wouldn't leave Richie behind even if her own life depended on it. If they went down, they went down together.

Using the last of her strength, Bev managed to drag Richie behind the crates just in time, as the approaching car stopped at the mouth of the alley, scanning the dark like predators on the prowl. She clamped a hand over both of their mouths, chests heaving wildly in an attempt to catch their breath. The muffled bickering of the gang eventually ceased with a blazing outburst from Henry, and a swift demand for the search to continue. *Thank god*, Beverly thought wearily, praising the heavens her luck had turned.

After what seemed like an age, the car finally pulled away, continuing its slow slink through the empty streets of Derry.

“Oh, thank fuck...” Richie let out a heavy sigh, leaning forward with hands on his knees as he proceeded to almost hack up his lungs, body tensing with each convulsion.

“God Richie, you’re starting to sound like Wheezy...” A harsh thump to his shoulderblades sent him jolting forward, as Beverly snickered weakly, both lightheaded and delirious from the adrenaline flooding through their veins.

Her eyes scanned Richie’s face absentmindedly, eyes draw to the thin streams of blood from grazes and cuts that painted mock war paint across his dimpled skin. Her brow furrowed, creasing porcelain skin.

“That was some wipeout, Rich...” Bev breathed out a silvery plume of mist into the biting cold, reaching down to rub at a sharp, needling cramp in her side. She observed him wordlessly from the corner of her vision, slumped and nursing his cheek, determined to ensure the poor kid was uninjured further. Said boy grinned tiredly in response.

“Worth it.”

Their eyes met again in a fleeting moment, a welcomed silence enveloping them. They took a second to bask in each other’s company, before finally giving into the hilarity of the situation once more and spiralling back into fits of howling laughter. Doubled over, their chorus of giggles cut through the quiet for a good few minutes, until they were gasping for breath once more, brief eye contact rousing yet another round of cackles.

Happiness bubbled and rose in their chests like a soaring kite, lifting

them high above the streets of Derry, high above Maine, high above parents, high above the looming grey that threatened to close in on their lives like creeping mold.

At that moment, an indescribable feeling of warmth spread through the both of them, flooding them with the urge to embrace. They did just that, Bev reaching over to wrap her thin arms around Richie's lanky figure happily, both still giggling and practically glowing from equal parts excitement and relief.

As they pulled away with a contented sigh, Richie cracked open an eye and flashed Beverly his typical charming grin, before imparting his usual misguided wisdom with the ease of a seasoned agent of chaos.

"So... How 'bout Round 2?"